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***Reconstruction of the façade and tower of the church
of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Kostomłoty
according to the design by Karl Friedrich Schinkel
against the background of his other projects
as an example of the reconstruction of a Baroque church
in the spirit of Neo-Gothic***

Abstract

Kostomłoty is currently a small village in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship near Wrocław. The most valuable monument of the settlement is the parish church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, located in the centre on the western side of the market square. Due to the sparse iconographic materials of the church from before 1900 and the lack of extensive research, it is difficult to determine the exact changes that took place in the building. The Gothic structure of the church was erected in the mid-14th century. In the mid-16th century, it was renovated and expanded with a Renaissance porch. In the Baroque period, the tower received a new spire. A query in foreign archives conducted by the authors revealed a plan for the reconstruction of the church from 1818, signed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel. In 1818–1819, based on the design of Schinkel, a new tower with staircase annexes was built on the foundations of the old one in the spirit of Neo-Gothic, creating a kind of westerwork. A detailed comparative analysis of the design and iconography of the historical tower from 1898–1909 shows that this project was almost entirely completed.

Schinkel's designs for the reconstruction of existing buildings received significantly less attention than his designs for new buildings. This work, as a contribution to the topic, sheds some light on the project of the Neo-Gothic reconstruction of the baroque church and its implementation in the context of other Neo-Gothic tower masses designed by the same architect.

Key words: Karl F. Schinkel, Neo-Gothic, reconstruction, church tower, Kostomłoty

Introduction

Kostomłoty is a small village in the Lower Silesian Voivodeship, located near Wrocław. The most valuable historical monument of the settlement is the parish church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, situated in the centre of the village on the western side of the market square. The church's original patron was St. Gotthard (also known as

Gotard or Godehard), Bishop of Hildesheim, who was canonized in 1131 (Ecke 1927, 19). Kostomłoty was originally a ducal village before coming under the ownership of the Monastery of St. Vincent in Wrocław (initially Benedictine, and later – until the secularization of the order in 1810 – Premonstratensian), serving as their summer residence (Heyne 1860). In 1214, the village was granted town rights based on the Środa Śląska model. The town suffered significant destruction during the Thirty Years' War; only the church survived. As a result of the war, in addition to widespread damage, the town lost its municipal rights. These were restored on May 29, 1692, by Emperor Leopold I, thanks to the intervention of the Premonstratensian abbot. After Silesia was annexed by Prussia, the town began to lose its

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significance. Ultimately, Kostomłoty permanently lost its town status in 1875 (Oszczanowska, Sebzda and Trenkler 2010).

State of research

History of the church

The Gothic parish church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, later expanded in Renaissance and Neo-Gothic forms, together with the adjoining cemetery, constitutes a signifi-

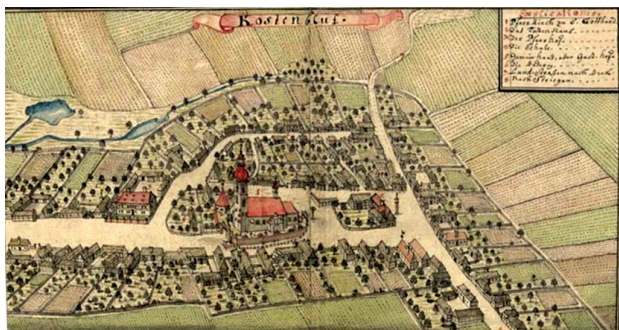


Fig. 1. The oldest representation of the church in Kostomłoty in a graphic by Friedrich Bernhard Werner (source: Werner 1751–1800)

Il. 1. Najstarsze przedstawienie kościoła w Kostomłotach na grafice Friedricha Bernharda Wernera (źródło: Werner 1751–1800)

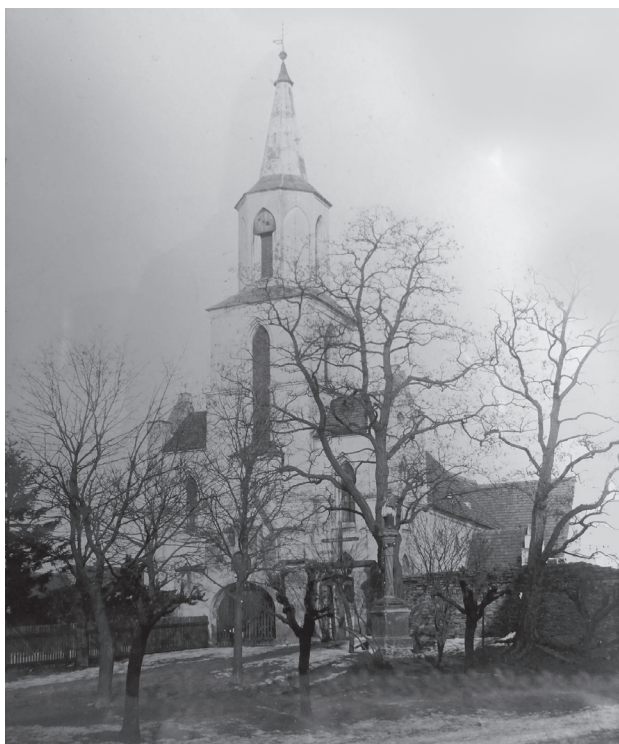


Fig. 2. Western elevation of the church in Kostomłoty from the square in front of the cemetery gate, 1909 (source: private collection, made available thanks to the kindness of the parish priest, Rafał Kupczak PhD)

Il. 2. Elewacja zachodnia kościoła w Kostomłotach z placu przed bramą cmentarną, 1909 (źródło: kolekcja prywatna, udostępnione dzięki życzliwości proboszcza parafii ks. dra Rafała Kupczaka)

cant architectural and landscape landmark of Kostomłoty. The church is first mentioned in a document issued by Pope Innocent III on August 12, 1201, as *ecclesia St. Godardi in Costomlot* (Oszczanowska 2017). It most likely existed earlier, although there is no direct evidence to confirm this.

The currently preserved structure is predominantly Gothic in the core of both the nave and the chancel – it was erected in the mid-14th century. The church was renovated in the mid-16th century and expanded between 1582 and 1585 with the addition of a Renaissance-style southern porch. During the Baroque period, the tower was topped with a stylistic helmet-shaped dome, visible in engravings by Friedrich Bernhard Werner from the mid-17th century (Fig. 1). The church retained this form until 1815, when the old tower was dismantled. Subsequently, between 1818 and 1819, a new tower was constructed on the foundations of the old one, along with staircase annexes, based on a design by Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Executed in the spirit of Neo-Gothic, the design created a distinctive westwerk. The project included the western façade and was realised almost in its entirety (Oszczanowska 2017).

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the church underwent numerous renovations. In 1861, the organ gallery became the focus of reconstruction efforts, and in 1867, restoration work was carried out on the tower and the choir loft. In 1879, a previously unrealised design for remodelling the organ gallery was implemented. In 1880, a design for the reconstruction and extension of the second storey (a gallery) of the sacristy was prepared, followed in 1881 by a project for a baptismal chapel on the south side of the chancel and the extension of the eastern choir. Both projects were realised, as confirmed by plans from 1894. In 1892, an unexecuted expansion design for the church was drawn up and signed by Willert, the Royal District Building Inspector from Leśnica. By 1909, the reconstruction of the tower based on Schinkel's design had certainly been completed, including the installation of a cross-bearing ball and likely some of the architectural decoration. According to researchers (and in our opinion), this reconstruction took place in 1909, as evidenced by commemorative photographs of the church's façade and interior from that year (Fig. 2). After 1945, regular maintenance work was carried out, namely, in 1959–1960 the roof covering was replaced, in 1970 the tower was renovated, and in 1997 the façade was restored. In 2003, conservation work was undertaken on interior furnishings and decorative elements (Oszczanowska, Sebzda and Trenkler 2010; Oszczanowska 2017). The most recent renovation took place in 2024 and was related to the restoration of the church façades (Fig. 3).

The dating of the various stages of the expansion of the church in Kostomłoty, prepared by Bożena Danielska in 1998 and presented in the *Leksykon zabytków architektury Dolnego Śląska* [Lexicon of Architectural Monuments of Lower Silesia] (Pilch 2005), does not fully align with the preserved iconographic material. The 19th-century Neo-Gothic chapel is clearly identified in it as a structure from the 15th century, while the remnants of the tower in the western mass, visible in Werner's mid-18th-century engraving, are considered – along with the added stairwell annexes – to be part of a 19th-century reconstruction (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3. The church in Kostomłoty after renovation of the façade in 2024:
a) view from the west, b) view from the front (photo by R. Kupczak, 2024)

Il. 3. Kościół w Kostomłotach po renowacji fasady w 2024 r.:
a) widok od zachodu, b) widok od frontu (fot. R. Kupczak, 2024)

Description of our own research

Research period and methods

This article synthesizes available historical and iconographic sources depicting the church in Kostomłoty, as well as the results of stratigraphic research conducted as part of the preparation for a conservation renovation project of the church's interior in Kostomłoty in August 2018 (Netczuk, Netczuk-Pol and Źmuda 2018).

The research methods employed by the authors of this article included archival queries (used for the historical and iconographic analysis of the church) as well as comparative analysis of churches designed by Schinkel from a similar period. The collected material, along with correspondence exchanged with the scientific department of the Berlin State Museums of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, made it possible to confirm the authorship of the church's façade design in Kostomłoty, in line with the conclusions drawn from the comparative analysis.

Historical and iconographic analysis: preserved iconography

Archival material concerning the church prior to 1900 is rather limited. It consists mainly of postcards depicting general views of Kostomłoty. The earliest available graphic

representation is a city plan by Werner from the mid-18th century. Particular attention should be paid to the appearance of the southern porch, especially its gable, which differs somewhat from its current form.

The most valuable available material is the church renovation plan from 1818, signed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel

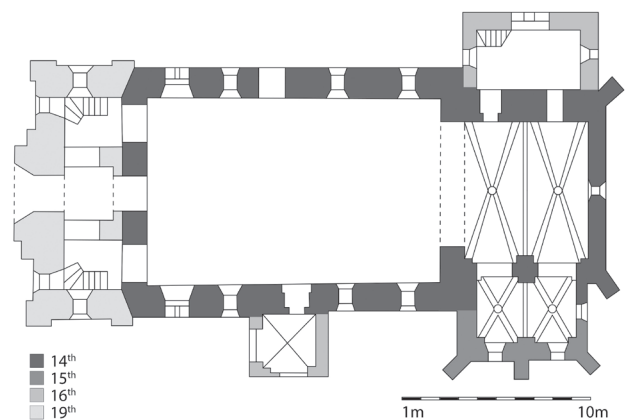


Fig. 4. Dating of the individual stages of the expansion of the church in Kostomłoty according to Bożena Danielska with corrections (source: Pilch 2005)

Il. 4. Datowanie poszczególnych etapów rozbudowy kościoła w Kostomłotach według Bożeny Danielskiej z naniesionymi poprawkami (źródło: Pilch 2005)



Fig. 5. The church in Kostomłoty in 1957: a) view from the east, b) view of the southern façade, c) view of the southern porch (source: Malinowski 1957)

Il. 5. Kościół w Kostomłotach w 1957 r.: a) widok od wschodu, b) widok południowej elewacji, c) widok południowej kruchty (źródło: Malinowski 1957)

(“Kostenblut [Kostomłoty, formerly Neumarkt County [*ehemals Kreis Neumarkt*]...”). A comprehensive guide to this architect’s works is Andreas Bernhard’s book (2006); unfortunately, it contains no mention of the Kostomłoty church renovation as one of Schinkel’s executed projects. However, a detailed comparative analysis of the design with the earliest available illustrations and photographs of the tower from 1898–1909 shows that the project was almost fully carried out. The only elements that were not executed include the tracery decorations in the niches, window tracery, and arcade friezes. The latter were completed before 1909.

Exterior form – current state

The parish church is situated on an elevation (a hill) in the western part of the market square, which is elongated along an east–west axis. The building is surrounded by a cemetery of an irregular shape, roughly resembling an oval.

The church is built of brick and rubble stone and is entirely plastered. The building’s layout is oriented along an east–

west axis. The nave was constructed on a rectangular plan resembling a trapezoid, with a wider western and narrower eastern end. The chancel (presbytery) is rectangular in plan. On the north side, it adjoins a sacristy with a gallery on the second floor; on the south side, there is a baptismal chapel. Attached to the south side of the main nave is a Renaissance porch with a portal and a gable designed in the form of an attic in the Mannerist style (Fig. 5). It currently serves as the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the western part of the nave is a wooden gallery (empora), accessible from the tower mass. The corners of the chancel and the southern chapel are reinforced with buttresses. The western part of the nave includes a tower mass with a four-storey tower (centrally positioned above the porch), flanked symmetrically to the north and south by stairwell annexes, each covered with gabled roofs. The tower’s top storey is octagonal and topped with a steep pyramidal spire clad in metal, a feature characteristic of Schinkel’s Neo-Gothic designs. The structure is crowned with a ball, a cross, and a weather vane bearing the date: 1818. The nave, sacristy with gallery,

Fig. 6. Design of the tower reconstruction and the addition of staircase annexes according to Schinkel from 1818 (source “Kostenblut (Kostomłoty, ehemals Kreis Neumarkt)...”)

II. 6. Projekt przebudowy wieży i dobudowy aneksów klatek schodowych według Schinkla z 1818 r. (źródło: “Kostenblut (Kostomłoty, ehemals Kreis Neumarkt)...”)



and southern baptismal chapel are all covered with gable roofs clad in ceramic tiles.

The western façade is tripartite and symmetrical, with a central tower and two-storey stairwell annexes on either side. The tower was constructed largely in accordance with Schinkel's design (Fig. 6), though not in its entirety – its rich Neo-Gothic tracery program was omitted. The central entrance portico is topped with a wimperg (a Gothic ornamental gable) and features a recessed, pointed arch surround. On either side are fluted pedestals, identical to those flanking the second storey of the stairwell annexes. The side elevations feature irregularly placed pointed-arch windows, which were added later during the Neo-Gothic renovation. This theory is supported by the discovery in 2018 of Renaissance polychromes dating from the 16th century, which conflict spatially with the current window placement (Wan-tuch-Jarkiewicz, Jarkiewicz 2018). On the north side, an early Renaissance sandstone portal from around 1550 has been bricked up. Fragments of Renaissance diamond-pattern sgraffito have also been revealed on the northern elevation. Centrally located on the southern elevation is a Renaissance porch with a sandstone portal featuring an inscription on the archivolt. The corners are decorated with pseudo-rustication, and the gable is topped with a three-axis, four-tier Renaissance attic, composed of quarter- and semicircular elements.

External structure

The oldest illustration depicting the church is a panorama of Kostomłoty, created by Werner around 1750. The church tower is square in plan and abuts the western wall of the nave. Reinforcements in the form of stepped buttresses are visible on the tower's western walls, suggesting a medieval

foundation. This hypothesis requires further verification. The results may be inconclusive, as remnants of the earlier walls may have been demolished during renovations. Above the roof eaves, the tower clearly has two stories. The entire structure is topped with a two-story onion-shaped dome in the Baroque style, with a single window. A turret with a Baroque onion-shaped dome was located at the top of the main roof ridge, closer to the eastern wall.

The southern entrance was preceded by a Renaissance porch with a characteristic Mannerist attic, preserved to this day. The southern wall clearly displays windows with roughly square proportions topped by a semicircular lintel. To the west of the porch were two windows, likely splayed or framed, while one to the east was located much higher than today and was smaller.

The secondary Gothicization of the building, designed by Schinkel in the 1st half of the 19th century, most likely led to a change in the shape of the windows by lowering the height of the sills. The lintels were also transformed, receiving a Gothic pointed arch (according to an erroneous statement on the white card [Danielska 1998], this shape dates from the 16th century). The original shape of the windows is unknown. Werner's engraving does not show a chapel on the south side of the chancel, which means it must have been built in connection with the reconstruction and expansion of the church in the 19th century, not in the 15th century, as suggested by Danielska's study (Pilch 2005).

Similar churches designed by Schinkel

A general comparative analysis of Neo-Gothic churches designed by Schinkel allows us to identify three buildings that are most similar in form and time of construction to the church in Kostomłoty (Pieske 1994): the tower of



Fig. 7. Schinkel's church façades' designs most similar to the design of the church in Kostomłoty:

- a) the tower of St. Andrew's Church in Teltow (source: Wikimedia Commons),
- b) the Evangelical Church in Großbeeren (author: Peter Groth, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0),
- c) reconstruction of the western façade of St. John's Church in Zittau (author: Manecke, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0)

Il. 7. Elewacje kościołów projektu Schinkla, które są najbardziej zbliżone do projektu kościoła w Kostomłotach. Są to:

- a) wieża kościoła św. Andrzeja w Teltow (źródło: Wikimedia Commons),
- b) kościół ewangelicki w Großbeeren (autor: Peter Groth, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0),
- c) przebudowa fasady zachodniej kościoła św. Jana w Żytawie (autor: Manecke, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0)

St. Andrew's Church in Teltow (Fig. 7a), the Evangelical Church in Großbeeren (Fig. 7b), and the façade in Zittau (Fig. 7c).

The first mention of St. Andrew's Church in Teltow dates back to the 13th century. It is described as a fieldstone structure. The building was repeatedly destroyed by fires that ravaged the city. On August 17, 1801, it burned to the ground, leaving only the brick walls. The first reconstruction project was prepared by master builder Schwarz, but it was not accepted for implementation. The church's final form was given in 1810 by Schinkel – he created a Neo-Gothic design (Fig. 8), which has survived unchanged to this day. He designed the southern, northern, and western portals, as well as the wall with the choir. Additionally, the front façade received a two-story tower mass, designed on an octagonal plan, topped by a pyramidal helmet-shaped dome with a crown (tower construction: 1811–1812) (“Die Schinkel-Kirche zu Großbeeren” 1998).

Another church with a form similar to the one in Kostomłoty is the Evangelical Church in Großbeeren, built between 1818 and 1820 according to Schinkel's design (Fig. 9) on the ruins of a church burned down during warfare in 1760. It was designed in the Neo-Gothic style. The church's plan is a Greek cross with a two-story tower on the northern axis. The first story of the tower is square, the second octagonal. The entire structure is topped with an octagonal pyramidal dome with a bell tower (Große 2016).

The Church of St. John in Zittau (German: Zittau; Czech: Žitava; Polish: Żytawa) was also rebuilt according to Schinkel's plans. It was first mentioned in the late 13th century, when it was a three-nave church with two towers at the

front. In the 16th century, it was expanded with another nave, creating a four-nave hall church. The church was destroyed in 1757 during the Seven Years' War. In 1766, construction began on the foundations of the old church in the Baroque style; it was finally completed in 1804. Unfortunately, the church was designed incorrectly and suffered from serious structural problems, particularly in the roof structure and the central part of the front façade and the southern tower. Schinkel, then head of the Prussian construction delegation, began the process of repairing the building. The renovation work was supervised by his student, Carl August Schramm. The renovation included replacing the barrel vault with a lighter coffered vault (excessive loads on the vault caused the southern tower to lean) and covering it with a simple gable roof (Fig. 10). The northern tower received an octagonal gable with a pyramidal helmet-shaped dome topped with a bell turret. For structural reasons, the taller southern tower could not be given a pointed dome. The entire façade was constructed in the neoclassical style (Große 2016).

Conclusions

Comparing the oldest available representation of the church in Kostomłoty with Schinkel's design allowed us to determine the changes that occurred in the original known form of the tower mass, the location and form of windows and doors. The Gothicization project was carried out almost entirely within the form and structure of the tower mass. The arrangement of window and door openings and their shape, as well as the arrangement of cornices, recesses, pilasters, and gables, are consistent with the design assumptions.

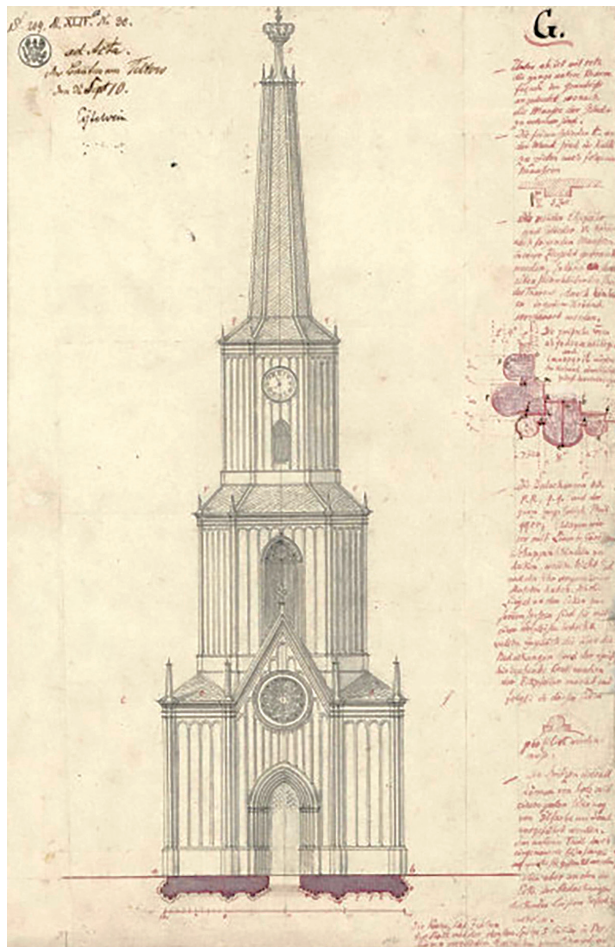


Fig. 8. Design of the façade of St. Andrew's Church in Teltow according to Schinkel (source: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett / Wolfram Büttner, <https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/1506073/teltow--st--andreskirche--turmentwurf-?language=de&question=teltow&limit=15&sort=relevance&controls=none&objIdx=5>)

Il. 8. Projekt fasady kościoła św. Andrzeja w Teltow według Schinkla (źródło: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett / Wolfram Büttner, <https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/1506073/teltow--st--andreskirche--turmentwurf-?language=de&question=teltow&limit=15&sort=relevance&controls=none&objIdx=5>)

No costly tracery was performed on the windows and entrance portal – in their place simpler doors were installed, with a transom and stained-glass windows in steel frames. The arcaded Neo-Gothic frieze under the cornice of all storeys was also abandoned. Furthermore, the window profiles (stepped) were simplified, and sharp pinnacles were omitted on the pilasters flanking the gables of the tower's "transept" and the wimperg (gable) of the main portal. The corner windows of the octagonal tower were also simplified to flat niches. In the plan, the current direction of ascent in the side staircases is opposite to that planned in the design: originally, the entrance to the porch was supposed to be located on both sides.

Summary

A general comparative analysis with other Neo-Gothic churches designed by Schinkel allows us to conclude that

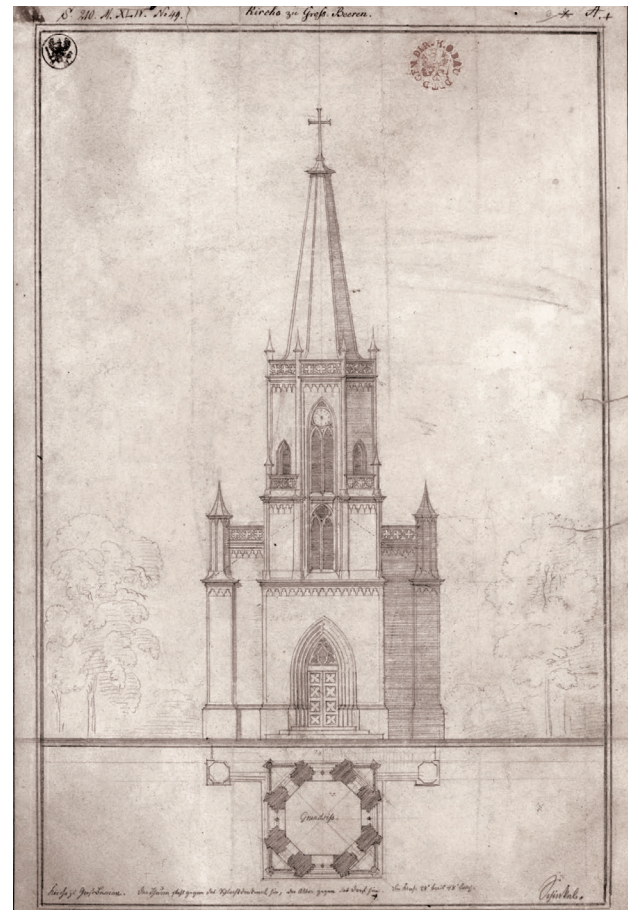


Fig. 9. Design of the façade of the Protestant Church in Großbeeren according to Schinkel (source: <https://smb.museum-digital.de/object/88265>)

Il. 9. Projekt fasady kościoła ewangelickiego w Großbeeren według Schinkla (źródło: <https://smb.museum-digital.de/object/88265>)



Fig. 10. Design for the reconstruction of the façade of the church in Zittau (Polish: Żytawa) according to Schinkel (source: <https://smb.museum-digital.de/object/90224>)

Il. 10. Projekt przebudowy fasady kościoła w Zittau (pol. Żytawa) według Schinkla (źródło: <https://smb.museum-digital.de/object/90224>)

the Kostomłoty church tower's façade design most closely resembles the design of the Teltow church tower (the octagonal lantern and dome, cornice friezes, and characteristic pinnacles in the form of spires) and the western façade of the church in Zittau (the distinctive octagonal helmet-shaped dome), rebuilt between 1834 and 1837. The church in Großbeeren, the church tower in Zittau, and the church tower in Kostomłoty were designed during the same

period (1817–1821). Nevertheless, the western mass of the Kostomłoty church demonstrates greater stylistic coherence than the other similar Schinkel designs, and it is characterised by good proportions and a rich façade program. It is an example of a mature work in the Neo-Gothic style.

Translated by
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Streszczenie

Przebudowa fasady i wieży kościoła pw. Podwyższenia Krzyża Świętego w Kostomłotach według projektu Karla Friedricha Schinkla na tle innych jego realizacji jako przykład przebudowy barokowego kościoła w duchu neogotyku

Kostomłoty to obecnie niewielka wieś w województwie dolnośląskim, nieopodal Wrocławia. Najcenniejszym zabytkiem osady jest zlokalizowany w centrum, po zachodniej stronie placu rynkowego, kościół parafialny pw. Podwyższenia Krzyża Świętego. Ze względu na nieliczne zachowane materiały ikonograficzne kościoła sprzed 1900 r. oraz brak szerszych badań trudno ustalić dokładne zmiany zachodzące w bryle budynku. Gotycką bryłę kościoła wzniesiono w połowie XIV w. W połowie XVI w. została wyremontowana i rozbudowana o renesansową kruchtę. W okresie baroku wieża otrzymała nowy hełm. Przeprowadzona przez autorów kwerenda w zagranicznych archiwach ujawniła plan przebudowy kościoła z 1818 r. sygnowany przez Karla Friedricha Schinkla. W latach 1818–1819 na podstawie tego projektu w duchu neogotyku na zrębach starej wieży wybudowano nową wraz z aneksami klatek schodowych, tworząc swoisty westerwerk. Szczegółowa analiza porównawcza projektu i ikonografii historycznej wieży z lat 1898–1909 wykazuje, że projekt zrealizowano niemalże w całości.

Projektom przebudów istniejących obiektów autorstwa Schinkla poświęcono zdecydowanie mniej uwagi niż projektom nowych budynków. Niniejsza praca rzuca nieco światła na projekt neogotyckiej przebudowy barokowego kościoła i jego realizację na tle innych neogotyckich maszywów wieżowych zrealizowanych według projektu tego samego architekta.

Słowa kluczowe: Karl F. Schinkel, neogotyck, przebudowa, wieża kościelna, Kostomłoty